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NEWSLETTER

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ONE-TIME DEPRESSED TOWN ON VERGE OF BOOM

Summersville, West Virginia, a town of 2,500 people, might have posed six years ago as an example of depressed Appalachia, but today it's an example of how a town can develop--with a little aid.

During the past six years, the town's unemployment rate has been reduced from 20% to 7%, a drop of nearly two-thirds. And city officials expect about 300 additional jobs to open up within two years.

Army Engineers have built a 357-foot dam on the Gauley River, eight miles south of Summersville, creating a large lake. New roads, an airport and other facilities are being built. A U.S.-financed convalescent hospital on the lake will be finished next year, and a privately-owned lodge and resort is expected to be built in 1968.

GREENSPAN AGREEMENT TO HELP MICHIGAN SCHOOL

The Chelsea, Michigan, School District plans to build a new junior high school and develop an outdoor laboratory--complete with nature trails, a one-acre wildlife pond and areas for wildlife feeding, camping and winter sports.



A Greenspan agreement will help the school district buy cropland to convert into the outdoor recreation and nature study area. Greenspan is part of the Department of Agriculture's Cropland Adjustment Program to shift cropland presently not needed into public wildlife and recreation facilities, needed open space or prevention of air or water pollution.

The school district plans to build the junior high school on 15 of the 56 acres of farmland it is buying and to develop the outdoor laboratory on the other 41 acres.

Although the Greenspan aid amounted to only \$1,834, it was enough to tip the scales toward a public improvement that otherwise would not have been possible.

Under another Greenspan agreement, the Wa-Nee Community School Corporation, Elkhart-Kosciusko Counties, Indiana, is buying six acres of cropland which will become a recreation area, including three softball diamonds, a football practice field and a playground. The area will be open to the public as well as to school children.

The Agriculture Department recently announced the Cropland Adjustment Program will be continued for 1967 with increased rates, except for cotton, and the dual objective of farm and nonfarm benefits through shifting cropland presently not needed for agricultural production into long-term conservation, recreational, and open space uses.

WATERSHED PROJECTS PROVE RURAL AMERICA CAN PROVIDE NEEDED SPACE

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman, recently dedicating Texas' 1,000th watershed dam, pointed to small watershed projects as "proof that rural America can provide living and working space for millions more of her citizens."

He said the first 635 small watershed projects undertaken by local sponsors and USDA's Soil Conservation Service brought to communities more than 500 new businesses and industries employing nearly 10,000 persons. Another 650 businesses and industries created 11,000 more jobs through expansion.

Construction of the projects provided nearly 30,000 man-years of employment.

The new businesses, Mr. Freeman said, "were attracted by a newly-created water supply and opportunities for recreation and country living for their employees."

SELF-HELP, AID BRING AREA GAINS

The Mohave County, Arizona, Area Development Council, organized in 1962 with help from the Cooperative Extension Service, has sparked rural areas development and helped the county secure a variety of state and federal development aids.



The council obtained two state grants for water resources feasibility studies, secured a federal grant to study the feasibility of an airport authority to include industrial and recreational development possibilities and helped the town of Chloride organize a sanitary district to facilitate more industrial and residential expansion already under way as a result of a new copper mine.

In 1965, the council incorporated so it could contract with the Office of Economic Opportunity as the local community action agency. Last summer, it sponsored Headstart and Neighborhood Youth Corps programs, which have continued.

The council is planning, with cooperation of the public school system, an adult basic education program and special training for retarded children. Other rural development projects include work on agricultural production and marketing, recreation, and community beautification.

EXECUTIVE ORDERS TO HELP COMMUNITIES, ALLEVIATE POVERTY

President Johnson has issued two executive orders to strengthen coordinated efforts to revitalize rural areas and eliminate the causes of rural poverty.

One directs the Secretary of Agriculture to coordinate all Federal programs affecting agriculture and rural areas development to work with other U.S. departments and independent agencies to make certain any program which can benefit rural communities or individuals is available.

The other sets up a President's Committee on Rural Poverty and a National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty.

The President's Committee will be chaired by Secretary Freeman and will be made up of government officials. The Advisory Commission headed by Governor Edward Breathitt of Kentucky, will be composed of leaders in private life.



The advisory group will make a comprehensive study and appraisal of the current economic situation and trends in rural life, as they relate to income and community problems.

Then both groups will explore ways existing programs and activities can be better coordinated or re-directed to get at the rural poverty problem. They will make recommendations for expanded public and private action.

RAD PROJECTS CREATE MORE THAN 79,000 NEW JOBS

Industrial developments which the Cooperative Extension Service helped local leaders establish resulted in more than 79,000 new jobs in rural areas between July 1, 1965, and June 30, 1966.

Secretary Freeman said a report by Extension on rural development projects showed many of the more than 6,000 new business ventures developed were in low-income areas. Extension Service workers in the past six months also helped plan or develop 6,850 community facility projects, 8,174 natural resource development projects and hundreds of projects aimed at individual development.

LOUISIANA TOWN RAD WORK BECOMES BOOK SUBJECT

Community development work, starting 14 years ago in the community of Brouillette, Louisiana, was so successful it became the subject of a book and served as a model for Avoyelles Parish.

The book, Louisiana: The Community, was written by Mrs. Blanche Swan, extension home demonstration agent. It describes the work in Brouillette.

Some of the early work included hard-surfacing a road, putting up uniform mail boxes, repairing fences, painting and repairing homes and barns and developing a community recreation program.



This set an example which resulted in friendly but spirited competition among four communities. They improved high school curricula, established ball parks, community centers and dumps, remodeled churches, and built a feed mill.

This was only the start of a long line of development projects--many with Extension Service help--which have been spurred by publicity and a competitive spirit.

MORE THAN 165,000 RURAL YOUTHS EARN SCHOOL MONEY

More than 165,000 rural youngsters earned back-to-school money or acquired new job skills for future employment through the Neighborhood Youth Corps program in 1966.

Secretary Freeman said almost \$80 million entered the rural economy through the program --more than double the amount of the previous year.

HOUSING CREDIT, WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS INCREASE

More than 32,000 families used \$268.5 million of Farmers Home Administration (FHA) credit during fiscal year 1966 to build and improve homes. The 32,000 is twice that of the previous year and a record.

Also, nearly 600,000 rural Americans will benefit from a record number of community water or sewer systems to be built or improved through loans and grants advanced during fiscal 1966 by the FHA. This compares with 280,000 who benefited the previous year.

For example, five communities in Warren County, Tennessee, have been revitalized during the past 3 1/2 years through construction of FHA-financed central water systems, benefiting 6,000 persons.



Since water started flowing from five systems serving Irving College, Lower Collins, North Warren, Centertown and Viola farm and other rural residents, these changes have taken place:

--Four new industrial plants and 17 service businesses have come into being.

--More than 200 new homes have been built, 390 remodelled, six community buildings constructed and about \$31,500 in new appliances bought.

--The communities have more adequate fire protection and all schools for the first time have enough water.

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